1. (currently amended) A method for altering a header of an
incoming frame entering a network node to a modified header
of an outgoing frame leaving the network node, the header
having a layered structure, the method comprising the steps
of:

assigning frame alteration commands at relative positions
with respect to <u>at least one layer of</u> the layered structure;

adjusting the relative positions of the frame alteration
commands to adjusted relative positions, in correspondence
to previously assigned frame alteration commands with
respect to the <u>at least one</u> ~~same~~ layer; and,

translating the adjusted relative positions to absolute
positions for sequentially executing the frame alteration
commands in a frame alteration unit.

2. (original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the
step of translating is performed in dependence on a packet
information structure comprising layer starting positions
and on content of the frame alteration commands.

3. (original) A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the
step of adjusting is performed in dependence on content of
the frame alteration commands.

4. (original) A method as recited in claim 2, comprising
generating the layer starting positions by a parser unit.

5. (original) A method as recited in claim 2, comprising
appending further layer starting positions to the packet
information structure by a processing unit.

6. (original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the
frame alteration commands comprise a respective layer
number.

7. (currently amended) An apparatus for altering a header with layered structure of an incoming frame entering a network node to a modified header of an outgoing frame leaving the network node, the apparatus comprising:

   an assignment unit for assigning frame alteration commands at relative positions with respect to <u>at least one layer of</u> the layered structure;

   an adjustment unit for adjusting the relative positions of the frame alteration commands to adjusted relative positions, in correspondence to previously assigned frame alteration commands with respect to the <u>at least one</u> ~~same~~ layer; and

   a translation unit for translating the adjusted relative positions to absolute positions for sequential execution of the frame alteration commands.

8. (original) An apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the translation unit is responsive to a packet information structure comprising layer starting positions and to content of the frame alteration commands.

9. (original) An apparatus as recited in claim 8, wherein the adjustment unit is responsive to content of the frame alteration commands.

10. (original) An apparatus as recited in claim 8, comprising a parser unit for generating the layer starting positions.

11. (original) An apparatus as recited in claim 8, wherein the frame alteration commands comprise a respective layer number.

~~13~~. (currently amended) <u>12.</u> An apparatus as recited in ~~claims~~ <u>claim</u> 8, comprising processing logic.

14. (currently amended) 13. An apparatus as recited in claim
12 13, wherein the assignment unit, the adjustment unit and
the translation unit are implemented in the processing
logic.

15. (currently amended) 14. An apparatus as recited in claim
12 13, comprising a frame alteration unit connected to the
output of the processing logic for sequential execution of
the frame alteration commands.

16. (currently amended) 15. An apparatus as recited in claim
14 15, wherein the translation unit is implemented in the
frame alteration unit, and the assignment unit and the
adjustment unit are implemented in the processing logic.

17. (currently amended) 16. An apparatus as recited in claim
14 16, wherein the translation unit and the adjustment unit
are implemented in the frame alteration unit, and the
assignment unit is implemented in the processing logic.

18. (currently amended) 17. An apparatus as recited in claim
12 13, wherein the processing logic comprises a plurality of
processing units.

19. (currently amended) 18. A computer readable program
storage device readable by a digital processing pocessing
apparatus and having a program of instructions which are
stored tangibly embodied on the storage device and which are
executable by the processing apparatus to perform a method
of altering a header of an incoming frame of network node to
a modified header of an outgoing frame, the method
comprising:

assigning frame alteration commands at relative positions with respect to <u>at least one layer of</u> the layered structure;

adjusting the relative positions of the frame alteration commands to adjusted relative positions, in correspondence to previously assigned frame alteration commands with respect to the <u>at least one</u> ~~same~~ layer; and

translating the adjusted relative positions to absolute positions for sequentially executing the frame alteration commands in a frame alteration unit.